



# New grant funds best practices in teacher training

September 9, 2020

LOS ALAMOS, N.M., Sept. 9, 2020—Los Alamos National Laboratory and New Mexico Highlands University join forces with four public school districts to increase the number of highly skilled teachers in the state, thanks to a new grant of \$321,381 from the New Mexico Public Education Department. The four public school districts are Albuquerque, Bernalillo, Pojoaque Valley, and Santa Fe. The project is an outgrowth of the Regional Partnership School, a collaboration among Pojoaque Valley Schools, New Mexico Highlands University, and the Laboratory—the first of its kind among a public school, public university, and regional employer in New Mexico.

“As a committed community partner, Los Alamos National Laboratory believes in supporting educators as they prepare the next generation to join the workforce and bring prosperity to the region,” said Thom Mason, Laboratory Director. “I thank the state of New Mexico and our partners in elementary, secondary, and higher education for coming together for this game-changing initiative where we all stand to win.”

“Highlands is deeply committed to providing equitable education to all children,” said Sam Minner, President of New Mexico Highlands University. “This grant will produce highly qualified and confident educators for our children in the schools with the greatest needs.”

State Representative Andrea Romero introduced legislation in the 2020 session creating a pilot project for a teacher-in-residence program.

“Our students deserve well-trained teachers,” Romero said. “I am pleased to see best practices in education take root in New Mexico.”

Funding will support 10 state residents who are teachers in training with a stipend of \$20,000 each. The grant requires teacher residents in the program to hold a bachelor’s degree. They will complete the program with a New Mexico teaching license. The grant also funds training for the mentoring teachers as well as professional development activities in mathematics across the four partner school districts.

“This innovative grant will build a clinical residency program to effectively train new teachers who reflect the diversity of the populations of our partner schools,” said Mary Earick, Dean of the School of Education at Highlands and lead researcher of the grant. “What gives me great joy is that we’re looking at a more impactful way of preparing teachers using a co-teaching and mentorship model.”

Since 2018, the three partners have been collaborating on the Regional Partnership School in Pojoaque, where four full-time Laboratory employees with expertise in

education have worked with the two educational institutions to create a model system for teacher development. The program follows the professional development school approach that has enjoyed success across the country, where a school becomes a center of excellence in teacher development in much the same way as a teaching hospital fosters the development of doctors and medical research.

### **About New Mexico Highlands University**

New Mexico Highlands University is a public, state-funded institution located in Las Vegas, New Mexico, with centers in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Farmington, and Roswell, offering undergraduate and graduate degrees. Its mission is to provide opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to attain an exceptional education by fostering creativity, critical thinking, and research in the liberal arts, sciences, and professions within a diverse community.

### **About Pojoaque Valley School District**

Pojoaque Valley Public Schools is situated in a valley just north of Santa Fe between the backdrops of the Jemez and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. It serves the Pojoaque Valley and the communities of Nambé, Jaconita, Tesuque, El Rancho, and Arroyo Seco. The district has one high school, one middle school, one intermediate school, one sixth grade academy, and one elementary school. Pojoaque Valley Schools is a collection of communities near the Pojoaque Pueblo with people from various ethnic backgrounds. The Pojoaque Valley School District (PVSD) serves approximately 2,000 students including those from the Pueblos of Nambe, Pojoaque, Ohkay Owingeh, San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, and Tesuque.

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